



One Hundred Thirteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515

May 30, 2014

Ms. Lisa Monaco  
Assistant to the President for  
Homeland Security and Counterterrorism  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Monaco,

As you know, in August 2011 President Obama released the *National Strategy on Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*. This strategy, commonly referred to as the Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), was a step in the further development in our national effort to combat Violent Islamist Extremism, as it broadly outlined roles for federal agencies working to prevent radicalization and to deter and disrupt terrorist attacks in the United States. Sadly, we were reminded of the importance of this effort once more when Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev detonated their improvised explosive devices near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Though both had been welcomed to the United States (and one of them only recently granted citizenship), their attack demonstrated the persistent threat posed by the ideology of al Qaeda and their allies.

As you and I recently discussed, homegrown Violent Islamist Extremism is perhaps the most difficult and dangerous security problem facing our law enforcement and intelligence communities. I appreciate the vision you laid out in your recent remarks at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government where you noted that a successful CVE program requires the combined efforts of multiple federal agencies, local communities, and state and local authorities. The Committee on Homeland Security, as well as our counterparts in the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and other Congressional Committees, also play a role in this effort – overseeing the policies and programs designed to protect the US Homeland from the threat of Violent Islamist Extremism. Toward that end, the Committee has begun a review of the Administration's progress in achieving the goals issued in the 2011 CVE Strategy and the corresponding December 2011 *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*.

This review will include briefings with relevant federal, state and local agencies, outside experts, foreign partners, local communities, and others. There will also be written requests for specific information and a review of literature produced both by

federal agencies and other organizations on CVE training, best practices, policies, and impact assessments.

Though this review is only in its initial stages, I have concerns about the lack of established metrics for evaluating the impact and success of various CVE programs laid out in the Administration's implementation plan. Of note, the implementation plan states, "Departments and agencies will be responsible for assessing their specific activities in pursuit of SIP objectives..." Such undefined self-evaluation is not sufficient for a mission as critical and challenging as our national CVE efforts.

I also have concerns about the lack of a lead federal agency for CVE, lack of a single, straightforward federal CVE definition, lack of CVE funding lines in the President's budget requests, and the lack of comprehensive available detail on federal CVE programs and the number of personnel working this key homeland security threat on a full or part time basis. However, I am encouraged by the FY 2014 grant guidance relating to CVE efforts, and will pay attention to how this focus on CVE can be incorporated to other programs.

I am hopeful this review will serve to strengthen our national efforts to combat al Qaeda's violent ideology, and I look forward to continuing our dialogue, I suggest that our staffs begin interacting soon to have a thorough and fruitful examination. Defeating Violent Islamist Extremism is vital to the national security of the United States, and no issue demands our mutual cooperation more than those affecting the safety and security of American citizens. Ultimately, I am confident we can work together to identify both the strengths and continued challenges in the 2011 Countering Violent Extremism Strategy and Strategic Implementation Plan.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL T. McCAUL

Chairman

Committee on Homeland Security

CC:

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